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Enright, Richard E.

Address by Police Comm. Richard E. Enright

[S.l.]

[1925]

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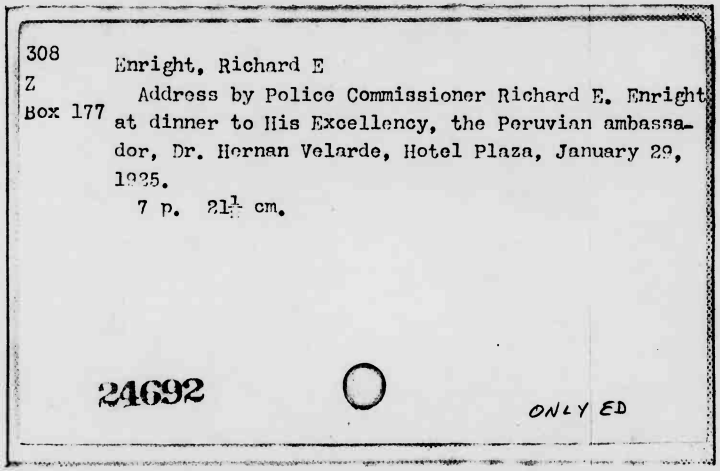
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Enright, Richard E
Address by Police Commissioner Richard E. Enright at dinner to His Excellency, the Peruvian ambassador, Dr. Hernan Velarde, Hotel Plaza, January 29, 1935.
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ADDRESS BY

POLICE COMMISSIONER RICHARD E. ENRIGHT

AT DINNER TO

HIS EXCELLENCY, THE PERUVIAN AMBASSADOR

DR. HERNAN VELARDE

HOTEL PLAZA, JANUARY 29, 1925

Apr 24, 1925 ABT

MR. PRESIDENT, YOUR EXCELLENCY, HONORED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

I appreciate very much the graceful compliment you convey to me, Mr. President, in calling upon me for a brief address upon this notable occasion, when we are gathered here to do honor to His Excellency, the Ambassador of Peru, a nation which is one of our warmest friends among all of the nations of the Southern Continent.

The relations existing between our respective countries, from the very beginning, have always been most friendly and cordial, and there has been exemplified in the dealings between our two nations an idealistic reciprocity which we all fervently pray may be extended to all other nations, more particularly those of the great Continent of South America.

For many years Africa was regarded as the "Dark Continent" until the great explorers Stanley and Livingston, and the enterprising genius of Cecil Rhodes and his compatriots illuminated that vast continent, and to-day it is an open book, and we are quite as familiar with Africa and all that it stands for as we are with our nearest neighbors or any of the nations across the sea.

But to most North Americans, South America is still a dark continent. We know or we pretend to know something of the great republics of the South, something of the people of South America and something of the vast territory over which they hold sway. We know or we pretend to know something of their governments, something of their institutions, something of their traditions, something of their ideals, but if that information really exists, it is confined to the very few who have made it a special study, while, so far as our people generally are concerned, South America is still a "terra incognito" for, except in a most general way, the average North American is benighted so far as real knowledge of the people of South America, their government and their institutions are concerned.

Perhaps it is not our fault that South America has been Europeanized instead of North Americanized. South America was discovered, explored and settled by the peoples of the Latin races of Southern Europe while North America was discovered, explored and settled, for the most part, by people who came from the countries occupying the northern part of Europe, and, even after the South American republics, within the last century, shook off the political chains that bound them

to the Old World, still the wealthy, educated, influential and social forces remained loyal to the traditions of their European antecedents, and consequently their institutions, and their social and business life are based upon traditions and ideals entirely different from those which prevail in North America.

We have been very busy with our own affairs in the United States during the past century, and more particularly during the past fifty years, which has seen our country grow and expand in every direction until it is to-day in reality, even if it is not completely acknowledged, the foremost nation of the world.

We have been absorbed in our own affairs and business, the building of the great railroads, development of rivers and harbors, and the promotion of the vast commercial enterprises and educational institutions which have spread their influence throughout the world. We, therefore, have been too busy to interest ourselves, except in a most general way, in promoting business or social intercourse with other nations, and through our seeming neglect, the nations of Europe have taken advantage of their opportunity to extend and consolidate their influence in all parts of South America.

We, of the United States, have also been handicapped to a considerable extent in developing business and social intercourse with our sister republics of South America, because of the lack of adequate means of transportation, for it has only been within the past decade that adequate ships have sailed regularly from the ports of the United States to the great ports on the eastern and western coasts of South America.

It is only within very recent years that the route from New York to Rio de Janeiro or Buenos Aires, to Lima or Valparaiso, led direct from New York, for as you know, the shortest and best route for many years was by way of Liverpool.

It has been only within the past decade also, or even within the past few years, that adequate cable communications have been established between North America and South America, and for this great enterprise, we are forever indebted to the founder of the American Cables, Inc., James A. Scrymser, and to his brilliant successor, Mr. John L. Merrill, President of that great corporation, for the extension and development of a first-class line of communication, between North and South America.

What was true of transportation, was also true of communication for the quickest and really only means of communication with South America, other than the mails, was by way of European cables.

We have also had the difficulty of language to overcome, and difference of language is one of the greatest barriers in

business and social intercourse. It is very difficult to have the lady at your right pass you the pepper unless she understands what you are saying, and so far as engaging in entertaining conversation or making yourself agreeable, that is almost out of the question.

We will only establish complete social and business intercourse with South America when the boys and girls of North America have been taught the Spanish language, and have made themselves familiar with the governments, people, institutions, ideals and traditions of South America, as it is written in their own language, and until they are able, personally or otherwise, to communicate with them in their own tongue.

I think I am quite as familiar with history as it is taught in our schools, as most people of our country, yet in my schooldays, and I think very little improvement has since been made, we received little or no education respecting South America, its people, its governments and general affairs. Indeed, we were told quite as much about China, Japan or the South Sea Islands as we were told of the government and people of the great Southern Continent.

How many of the school children of North America know anything worth while of the story of General San Martin, the "Washington of South America." As I understood it from the books that I then read in school, this title was generally accorded to General Bolivar, who was indeed one of the greatest figures in the history of South America, and the liberator of several of the northern republics of the Southern Continent, but, great as was Bolivar, his fame and his achievements must take second place to that of General San Martin, whose glorious military exploits and sound political judgment wrought the salvation and independence of the greater part of South America.

It was General San Martin who, organizing his ragged and poorly equipped battalions of brave men, such as enlisted under the banners of our own Washington, crossed the mighty Andes and won victory and independence for a large part of South America on the battlefields of Chacabuco and Maipú.

And how many of our school children know anything of the story of that superb General Sucre who, on the field of Ayacucho, leading his brave and undaunted battalion numbering one quarter the military strength of the forces brought against him by Imperial Spain, won there a victory which ended forever Spanish domination in South America.

What do we know of General Belgrano, the hero of the Argentine or the marvelous Monk Beltran who, issuing forth

from his monastery at Mendoza and gathering about him his colleagues, and with the support and coöperation of the people of the countryside, personally built and operated the forges in which were moulded the implements of war which were necessary for the victory that the Napoleonic San Martin was to shortly win across the Andes on the Plains of Chile.

These are some of the things we do not know and they, only in a small way, illustrate our lamentable lack of information of South America, its traditions and affairs.

Adequate school books in both Spanish and English, dealing with South America, should be added to the curriculum in all of our schools and colleges, and by every means through our literature, our magazines and our other publications, the people of our country should be speedily brought closer in contact with the people of South America, their business and their affairs.

So far as the people of South America are concerned, they have in the past experienced the same difficulty as ourselves. The difficulties attending the lack of adequate transportation, adequate communication, the difficulty of language — and I presume they have taught their children very little of the story of the people of North America, but I am inclined to think that they have done better in this respect than we have.

I have recently returned from a tour of the Latin-American Republics, including the Republic of Panama, and I have talked with the Presidents, many cabinet officers, and high officials of the federal, state and city governments of these countries, and everywhere I was received with the utmost courtesy and manifest good will which I considered was not a personal tribute but a tribute of admiration and real friendship for the people of this city and our country.

Three of the Presidents whom I met and many other high officials, strangely enough, in the course of our talks, hit upon the same topic, "Why is it that so many Americans go annually to Europe on business and for pleasure, and why is it that so very few of them visit South America and those who come, remain with us but for a few days, hardly time to see our principal cities, even in a most superficial way, and of course they leave us with no real conception of our country and our people, and our institutions."

I explained to them that I thought it was the custom of our people to regularly visit Europe on business and pleasure because they had been accustomed to do it for many years due to the fact that transportation between North and South America was long and intermittent, and the best and only comfortable routes were from New York to Liverpool and from there to South America.

I told them also that it must be due to some extent to the fact that our trade, in the nature of things, was largely with Europe for South America, with some important exceptions, dealt in substantially the same commodities that we produce in the United States, and that social relations usually follow the lines of business, and that there were many other impediments such as the difference in the language, and difference in climate which had much to do with this lack of social intercourse between the people of the two continents.

The fact that the climate of South America in a general sense, is exactly the reverse of the climate of North America, that their Summer is our Winter and our Winter their Summer, had something to do with the situation. But I felt also that the people of neither continent were doing their duty, nor were they making any real progress in bringing about a change in this order.

Very little or no news of South America is published in North American papers, and conversely very little news of North America appears in the newspapers of the great Southern Continent, and all that has been said of the failure of the people of our country to visit South America, may be said with equal truth of the people of South America, for they seek also their vacation pleasures in Europe just as we do in North America.

It seems to me, however, that the story should now be told. The people of our country should be told that there now are adequate means of transportation, that the trip to South America is a very charming one, that they will find there great progressive cities in which they might find pleasure and entertainment which, to a North American, should be quite as captivating as those of continental Europe.

They will find that lines of communication are quite as good as they are with Europe, and they will also find that even though they leave our shores in the Summer time which is the Winter time in South America, they will not find the extremes of climate that we have here in the Winter time, for in all of Brazil, the climate is the climate of Florida, with none of the extremes of the Florida climate, while the climate of Uruguay the Argentine is, for the most part, the climate perhaps of North Carolina, except that Montevideo, Buenos Aires and vicinity have not known of frost for more than a generation.

They will find that the climate of the west coast is always mild, with none of the extremes that we are accustomed to in North America, and even the extreme torrid weather of our northern cities in the Summer time is practically unknown. So South America is a fairly comfortable place to visit either

in the Summer time or the Winter time, and the trip under Summer skies for most of the way, is delightful in the extreme.

While in my altogether too brief visit to Lima, I had the pleasure of meeting the illustrious President of the Republic, Mr. Leguia, one of the outstanding political figures of South America. He is a statesman of the first rank and easily one of the most able and progressive men who has ever been intrusted with the reins of government in his own country, or with the reins of government of any of the countries of South America.

He is now entering upon his third five-year term as President of the Republic of Peru, during which time he has led his country along the road of progress and to marvellous and surpassing development.

Foreign capital and engineering, much of it North American, is rapidly transforming and developing that country. Great railroads have been projected and are being constructed across the mountains, great water-powers have been developed and are in the course of development; irrigation is being extended, and the City of Lima itself, which is destined to be one of the most beautiful capitals of the world, is now being marvelously extended through great boulevards, leading in every direction and down to the sea.

The Leguia Era in Peru will be long remembered and his administration of affairs must be admired and might well be emulated by any progressive nation anywhere in the world.

Why don't we give a little more attention to South America, and why don't we even in a simple way demonstrate our interest, our desire to be of service, not "lip service" but real service, not professed admiration, but real admiration, not professed coöperation, but cordial coöperation and friendly relation along every line of endeavor.

The illustrious Dom Pedro, the last of the Emperors of Brazil, when he attended our Centennial Celebration at Philadelphia, and being present there on July 4, 1876, issued an imperial decree from Philadelphia ordaining that forever thereafter, the Fourth Day of July, the Indepence Day of the United States, should be celebrated in Brazil in the same way as they celebrate their own independence day, the Seventh Day of September.

That was a gracious act upon the part of the Emperor Dom Pedro and one which we might well emulate in this country, or at least in this, the greatest of Pan-American cities, the City of New York, for here in this city we should,

of course, have a greater interest in South America than in any other city of the nation.

Why should we not celebrate in New York City in a great banquet with appropriate ceremonies the 7th Day of September, the Indepence Day of Brazil; why should we not celebrate here in the same way, the 20th Day of May, the Independence Day of Uruguay; why should we not celebrate here the 25th Day of May, the Independence Day of the Argentine; why should we not celebrate here the 18th Day of September, the Independence Day of Chile; why should we not celebrate here, as I understand we are doing in a belated way tonight, the 9th Day of December, the Anniversary of the Battle of Ayacucho, the Independence Day of Peru. And why should we not celebrate here also the Independence Day of the other republics of South America, of Central America and Mexico, and from that source and from the inspiration that will radiate therefrom, we may, in a small way at least, demonstrate our admiration, our friendship and our sympathy for our sister republics to the south.

Yes, let us be up and doing; let us open up and expand existing avenues of communication and transportation; let us make the Spanish language a standard language that every school child of the United States shall learn in preference to any other foreign language, and let us extend throughout our country, organized or unorganized propaganda, which will teach our people all that they should know with respect to the people and the governments of the great countries to the south. And let us in every reasonable and proper way endeavor to break down the prejudice against us, built up by the Europeanizing forces who, for their own selfish reasons and because and through our seeming indifference or neglect, have had a monopoly in the development of trade and social intercourse with South America, and have made the most of their opportunities.

As a result of my short stay in South America, I am under the impression that the forward looking men of the Southern Continent believe that their future destiny is more closely associated with that of North America than it is with any of the Nations of the Old World.

I believe, too, that James G. Blaine, William McKinley and John Barrett, as well as many others who, for years have labored for the establishment of a very close reciprocity and entente cordiale with the people of South America, were eternally right, and we will do well to follow in their footsteps.

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